

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of finding out about and downloading software updates, comprising the steps of:
  - 5 sending a subscribe request for software updates regarding an application of a user terminal,
    - receiving an initial notify message having content defined by an event package, the initial notify message describing at least one available software version,
    - 10 checking if the user terminal has the available software version, and if not then automatically downloading an update to obtain the available software version, or giving the user a choice whether to download and obtain the available software version,
    - 15 receiving a further type of notify message having content defined by the event package, the further type of notify message describing at least one newly available update, and
    - 20 downloading the newly available update unless the user gets and exercises an option to not receive the newly available update,
    - wherein the at least one available software version was available to subscribers prior to the standardized subscribe request, but the newly available update is newly available to subscribers when the further type of notify message is received.
  2. The method of claim 1, wherein the method utilizes and is formatted based upon an application layer protocol known as Session Initiation Protocol, and wherein the event package requires at least one set of information as to software name, update server address, update retrieval protocol, and latest version.
  3. The method of claim 1, wherein the further type of notify message is sent substantially simultaneously to the user terminal and to other user terminals, but wherein the initial notify message is sent only to the user terminal and is sent to the user terminal substantially immediately after the standardized subscribe request is received and acknowledged.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the steps encompass, or are also performed for, at least one other application of the user terminal.
5. 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the subscribe request is sent to a centralized software server in the network.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein the subscribe request is sent to a respective server of a software provider.

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7. The method of claim 2, wherein the information further includes an update price and a latest update date.
8. The method of claim 1, wherein the sending step and the receiving step are each followed substantially immediately by transmitting an okay response.

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9. A computer-readable medium or media for use in a user terminal, the medium being encoded with a data structure for performing the method of claim 1.

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10. A system for finding out about and downloading software updates, comprising:
  - a first user terminal, for sending a standardized subscribe request signal indicative of at least one application in the first user terminal, and
  - a software server, responsive to the standardized subscribe request signal, for providing an initial notify signal having content defined by an event package, the initial notify signal being indicative of at least one available software version,

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- wherein the first user terminal is also for downloading an update to obtain the at least one available software version if the first terminal lacks the at least one available software version, provided that a user of the first terminal approved the downloading or has approved automatic downloading,

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wherein the system further comprises other user terminals that have at least one application in common with the first terminal,

5 wherein the first user terminal and the other user terminals are responsive to a further type of notify signal having content defined by the event package, the further type of notify signal being indicative of at least one newly available update to the at least one application in common, and

10 wherein the first user terminal and the other user terminals are for downloading the at least one newly available update insofar as respective users approve the downloading, or insofar as the respective users have approved automatic downloading.

11. The system of claim 10, wherein the at least one application includes applications from at least two software providers.

15 12. The system of claim 10, wherein the event package requires at least one set of information as to software name, update server address, update retrieval protocol, and latest version.

20 13. The system of claim 10, wherein the software server is a centralized software server.

14. The system of claim 10, wherein the software server is a software provider server.

25 15. The system of claim 10, wherein the standardized subscribe request signal and the notify signal utilize, or are formatted consistently with, and event package based upon an application layer protocol known as Session Initiation Protocol.

30 16. A subscriber user terminal for finding out about and downloading software updates, comprising:

5        a plurality of application modules for providing a respective application profile including a respective software version; and

      a software update module, for subscribing to at least one server in order to receive software update notifications regarding the plurality of application

10      modules,

      wherein the software update module is also for responding to each of the notifications, by requesting at least one of the respective application profiles from the application modules, performing a comparison with a respective one of the notifications, and initiating a download procedure if the comparison indicates a mismatch.

15      17. The subscriber user terminal of claim 16, wherein the software update module is for finding out about and downloading software updates consistently with an event package that is based upon an application layer protocol known as Session Initiation Protocol.